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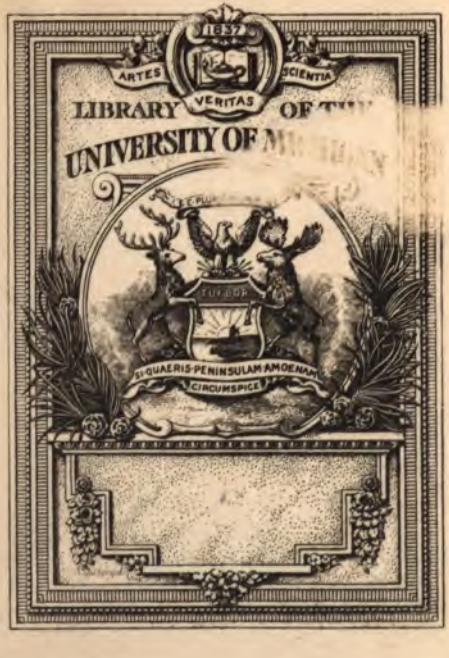
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L. A. Dema

LINCOLN
AND HIS CABINET

A LECTURE

DELIVERED ON TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 1896, BEFORE THE
NEW HAVEN COLONY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BY

CHARLES ANDERSON DANA
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR, 1863-65

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LINCOLN AND HIS CABINET

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President 1861–65. Born in Hardin County, Kentucky, February 12, 1809; died at Washington, April 15, 1865.

WILLIAM HENRY SEWARD, Secretary of State 1861–69. Born at Florida, New York, May 16, 1801; died at Auburn, New York, October 10, 1872.

SALMON PORTLAND CHASE, Secretary of the Treasury 1861–64. Born at Cornish, New Hampshire, January 13, 1808; died at New York, May 7, 1873.

WILLIAM PITT FESSENDEN, Secretary of the Treasury 1864–65. Born at Boscawen, New Hampshire, October 16, 1806; died at Portland, Maine, September 8, 1869.

SIMON CAMERON, Secretary of War 1861–62. Born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, March 8, 1799; died there June 26, 1889.

EDWIN McMASTERS STANTON, Secretary of War 1862–68. Born at Steubenville, Ohio, December 19, 1814; died at Washington, December 24, 1869.

GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy 1861–69. Born at Glastonbury, Connecticut, July 1, 1802; died at Hartford, Connecticut, February 11, 1878.

CALEB BLOOD SMITH, Secretary of the Interior 1861–62. Born at Boston, Massachusetts, April 16, 1808; died at Indianapolis, Indiana, January 7, 1864.

JOHN PALMER USHER, Secretary of the Interior 1863–65. Born at Brookfield, New York, January 9, 1816; died at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 13, 1889.

EDWARD BATES, Attorney-General 1861–64. Born at Belmont, Virginia, September 4, 1793; died at St. Louis, March 25, 1869.

JAMES SPEED, Attorney-General 1864–66. Born in Jefferson County, Kentucky, March 11, 1812; died there June 25, 1887.

MONTGOMERY BLAIR, Postmaster-General 1861–64. Born in Franklin County, Kentucky, May 10, 1813; died at Silver Spring, Maryland, July 27, 1883.

WILLIAM DENNISON, Postmaster-General 1864–66. Born at Cincinnati, Ohio, November 23, 1815; died at Columbus, Ohio, June 15, 1882.

Abraham Lincoln

LINCOLN AND HIS CABINET

☆

HAVE been invited to tell you some recollections of impressions that were made upon me during the period when I was serving at Washington and in the field under President Lincoln and Edwin M. Stanton. I felt no special anxiety to perform this duty, but it seemed to me as though I ought not to decline it. The number of

those who knew those men face to face, and saw them intimately during the time that tried men's souls, is already small, and growing smaller; and it is a duty to record the impressions and to narrate the facts of those times and of those relations.

The election of Abraham Lincoln was brought about by a dissension in the Democratic party. It was divided, and the Republican party was united, and the consequence was his election. The great question at issue in that election, although I do not think it was formally stated in the platforms of the parties, was this: Shall the owners of slaves enjoy the right of taking their slaves into the Territories of the United States that are now free, and keeping them there?

The slave-owners claimed that right. Slaves were property. They were like other property, and why should their owners be denied the right of taking their property into the Territories, when a Northern man could take his property—his horses, his oxen, whatever he possessed? The slaves were their oxen; they were their chattels; and they insisted that they ought to have the right of taking them into the Territories, and keeping them there as slaves. That was the fundamental question of the election. And when Mr. Lincoln was elected the South said: «Now we are denied this right, we will break up the government; we will secede; we will withdraw.» That right, too, they claimed as a constitutional principle. No Northerner had

claimed it, though some ardent partizans had threatened it; but several of the Southern States now set it up as an original, inalienable right. They claimed that the refusal to them of the right to take their property with them when they went to live in one of the new Territories was sufficient occasion for the withdrawal from the Union of the slaveholding States, and for the breaking up of the government.

That question was to be determined by war, and as soon as Abraham Lincoln was elected they began to prepare for war; and when he became President we began, on our side, to prepare for war. Previous to his inauguration there had been no preparation. When Mr. Lincoln was inaugurated as President his first

act was to name his cabinet; and it was a common remark at the time that he had put into the cabinet every man who had competed with him for the nomination in the Republican National Convention. The first in importance, in consequence, was William H. Seward, of New York, who had been Mr. Lincoln's most prominent competitor. It had been feared by many of those who were opposed to Mr. Seward's friends—he had no personal opposition, but some of his friends had a good deal—it was feared by those who were opposed to his friends that if he became President his friends would run the government, and run it for purposes that all might not approve. He was made Secretary of State.

It is worth while to notice this: the great opposition against Mr. Seward was because he was a New Yorker, and the Republican party in New York was under the control, more or less decided, of what is called a «boss.» And they said there should n't be any boss, but that the party should direct itself. Well, exactly what that means I have not been able to understand. An army without a general is of no use, and a ship without a captain does n't get navigated safely. I notice, too, that the class of politicians who are most strenuous against bosses are those who are not able to control for themselves the boss who happens to be in power in their district or their State. At any rate, that objection, managed by skilful politicians, and aided by Mr. Lincoln's personal

popularity in the West, availed sufficiently to deprive Mr. Seward of the nomination.

The second man in importance to be put into the cabinet was Mr. Chase of Ohio. He was a very able, noble, and spotless statesman, a man who would have been worthy of the best days of the old Roman republic. He had been a candidate, though less conspicuous than Seward; and he was also a candidate against whom the opposition that had been raised against Mr. Seward would not have availed, because, while Mr. Seward had a friend who was the boss of the Republican party in New York, Mr. Chase bossed it himself in Ohio.

Then there was Mr. Cameron of Pennsylvania. He was made Secretary of War. A very able man, a practical politician

of immense knowledge and resource, in earlier days a friend of General Jackson, one of the first and most decided statesmen to embrace the Republican cause and to advocate the Republican doctrine. He held the office of Secretary of War only a little over a year, I think, and there was an outcry against him, because they said he was buying too many guns, too many arms; he was spending too much money. And those who were against bosses were against this expenditure because they said they did n't think it could be quite correct. But all these things were investigated afterward, and nothing was ever proved against Simon Cameron except this: that he was a man with a manly heart in his bosom, that he appreciated the magnitude of the contest that was

upon us, and prepared for it accordingly. His preparations were equal to the danger at hand, and, instead of being decried, he ought to have had, and finally did obtain, the full credit to which he was entitled as a wise, patriotic, and provident statesman.

Next, Mr. Bates of Missouri was made Attorney-General. He also had been run a good deal as a candidate for the Presidential nomination against Mr. Seward, but there had never been any great probability that he would get it. He was a most eloquent speaker, and a very fair lawyer, and he served out his time in the cabinet until the end of the administration. He was an amiable and a gifted man, entirely creditable and satisfactory, without possessing any extraordinary genius or any unusual force of character.

Then there was Mr. Caleb B. Smith of Indiana, who was Secretary of the Interior, and Montgomery Blair of Maryland, a Democrat of the old school, who was Postmaster-General; both eminent, able, useful men.

I must not forget, especially here in New Haven, in this rapid review of the assistants of Mr. Lincoln, the members of the cabinet, to speak of the Connecticut member, Gideon Welles. He was Secretary of the Navy; and I am happy, at this distance, to testify to the fact that he was an excellent Secretary. He was a man of no decorations; there was no noise in the street when he went along; but he understood his duty, and he did it efficiently, continually, and unvaryingly. Other men were more conspicuous, be-

cause they were brought more immediately in contact with the people. The navy is off at sea, and we don't see all the time what it is doing. I am able to declare that Mr. Welles was a perfectly faithful, able, devoted, and successful public officer. The navy under his control was far more efficient,—it is true it was larger,—and more energetic than it had ever been before in our day. He was a satisfactory and substantial member of the government, and was always creditable to the State that sent him forth.

When Mr. Cameron went out of the cabinet, Mr. Lincoln, following the advice both of Cameron and of Charles Sumner, selected as his successor in the War Department Mr. Edwin M. Stanton. Stan-

ton was an old States'-rights Democrat. He had never voted anything but the Democratic ticket up to that time. He was a very extraordinary man, and it was through him that I came to be put into the War Department, and had the opportunities of acquiring the various information that I hope to lay before you this evening.

Mr. Stanton was a short, thick, dark man, with a very large head and a mass of black hair. He was very intense, and one of the most eloquent men that I ever met. He was entirely absorbed in his duties. His energy was something almost superhuman, and when he took hold of the War Department the armies seemed to grow, and they certainly gained in force and vim and thoroughness. The

time of preparation, which to us had before seemed so long and tedious that we were almost losing hope—that time came to an end, and the time of action began. I said that Mr. Stanton was a very eloquent man. In order to illustrate that, if you will allow me, I will tell a little story. In the last year of the war the Army of the Potomac had hanging around it a man, a sort of peddler—I think his name may have been Morse, but I don't remember positively; it was something like that. He went back and forward into Virginia. He would go down into the rebel lines, and then he would come back. When he went down he went in the character of a man who had entirely hoodwinked the Washington authorities and deluded them; and, in spite of them, or by some corruption

or other, he always brought with him into the Confederate lines something that the people wanted down there, some dresses for the ladies, or some little luxury that they could n't get otherwise.

These things that he took with him were always supervised by government agents before he went away. Then he would come back again, and bring us a lot of valuable information. As you see, he was a kind of spy for both sides. So he found a good thing in it, and we found a good thing in it, because in that way we got a great deal of information about the strength of armies, about the preparations and the movements of the enemy, and so on; and it was thought to be sufficiently useful to allow this thing to go on. Well, at last he came back and

went to Baltimore, and got his outfit to take down South; and when he came up the chief detective of the War Department examined his goods carefully, and found that he had got lots of things that we could not allow him to take. We had all his bills, telling where he had bought these things in Baltimore. They amounted to perhaps $20,000 or $25,000, or more. A good deal of this stuff was military goods and uniforms, and this, we said, was altogether too contraband. So we confiscated the contraband goods, and put Morse in prison; and one afternoon Colonel Taylor, a very valuable military officer, and a nephew of President Taylor, went over to Baltimore, and arrested the principal merchants of that town, who had sold these goods to Morse,—the chief dry-

goods dealers and fancy merchants,—so that no lady could go out and buy even a pair of gloves the next day, for the shops were all shut. Presently a deputation from Baltimore came over to see President Lincoln, to say that this was a great outrage, and that these gentlemen, most respectable merchants, faultless citizens, ought all to be set instantly at liberty and damages paid them. Mr. Lincoln sent the deputation over to the War Department, and Mr. Stanton sent for me. He said: «All Baltimore is coming here. Sit down here, and hear the discussion we shall have.» So they came in, the bank presidents and boss merchants of Baltimore. There must have been at least $50,000,000 in the deputation.

The gentlemen sat down around the fire in the Secretary's office, and began to make their speeches, detailing the circumstances and the wickedness of this outrage. There was no ground for it, no justification. After half a dozen of them had spoken, Mr. Stanton asked one after another if he had anything more to say, and they all said no. Then Stanton began and delivered the most eloquent speech that I ever listened to. He described the beginning of the war, for which he said there was no justification. Being beaten in an election was no reason for destroying the government. Then he went on to the fact that half a million of our young men had been laid in untimely graves by this conspiracy of the slave interest. He described the whole conspiracy in the

most solemn and impressive terms, and then he depicted the offense that this man Morse, aided by these several merchants, had committed. He said: «Gentlemen, if you would like to examine the bills of what he was taking to the enemy, here they are.» And when he had finished, these gentlemen, without answering a word, got up, and, one by one, went away. That was the only speech I ever listened to that cleared out the entire audience.

Well, that 's the sort of man Stanton was. He was impulsive, warm-blooded, very quick in execution, perhaps not always infallible in judgment. I never knew a man who could do so much work in a given time. He was a nervous man, a man of imagination, a man utterly absorbed in the idea of the republic one and indivis-

ible; and he lived for it, wore himself out in the service, and shortly after he ceased to serve in that office he passed into another world, entirely exhausted, consumed by his devotion to public duties. That was the kind of men that Mr. Lincoln had around him—not all like Stanton, not all like Cameron, not all like Chase, but all faithful to their duty, all Americans, all patriots.

Mr. Seward, for instance, possessed a great, subtle, far-reaching intelligence. He was an optimist. He had imagination. He was reaching out always toward the future, and dwelling upon it. The treaty by which we acquired Alaska was his doing. He also negotiated and arranged the treaty that Congress would not approve for the acquisition of St. Thomas in

the West Indies. He believed that North America should be one and united—one government, one flag, one power. His idea was that the islands of the Antilles, and the whole continent up to the frozen regions of the Arctic Ocean, should all live and grow great and mighty with that beautiful emblem, the Stars and Stripes, floating over them.

Probably in the administration Mr. Seward had the most cultivated and comprehensive intellect. He was n't equal to Mr. Lincoln, because, as I have said, he was altogether an optimist. He did n't believe any permanent injury could happen to anybody so long as the Stars and Stripes were there. During the war it was always said that he expected to bring back the seceding States by a

friendly act of Congress, or some device of negotiation. That was probably a fault in his judgment; yet, take him for all in all, it would be difficult to match him among living statesmen, or among the statesmen of the world. He was an American in earnest. He believed in that democracy which is democracy indeed. He believed in the Constitution of the United States, and his one desire was that its blessings should be extended and made perpetual over all this continent. I look back upon him with intense gratitude. He set up the landmarks toward which we are to come, the boundaries which we are to attain to. He proclaimed the principle of continental unity, and that unity he would found in freedom, in progress, and in improvement of every nature.

Such were the principal men by whom Mr. Lincoln was surrounded. They were very independent men. They were not always satisfied with his decisions, with his action; but he was always master of the house. There was no pretension about Abraham Lincoln; he did n't put on any airs, and I never heard him say a harsh word to anybody. I never heard him speak a word of complaint even. These other gentlemen, the members of the cabinet, like human beings in general, were not pleased with everything. Much was imperfect; much was not ordered in the best way; much, perhaps, might have been done better if they individually had had charge of it. Not so with the President. He was most calm, equable, uncomplaining, and, to

my mind, one of the happiest men that I have ever known. He always had a pleasant word for everybody. What he said showed the profoundest thought, even when he was joking. He seemed to see every side of every question. He never was impatient, he never was in a hurry, and he never tried to hurry anybody else. To every one he was pleasant and cordial; yet they all felt that it was his word that went at last, and until he had decided, the case had n't been decided, and the final orders not issued yet.

But, before going further, let me endeavor to give those in this audience who never saw Mr. Lincoln some idea of his personal appearance. He was a very tall man—six feet four inches.

His complexion was dark, his eyes and hair black, and, though he was of lean, spare habit, I should suppose he must have weighed over two hundred pounds. He was a man of fine fiber, and thus a brain of superior power was contained in a small but rather elongated skull. Horatio Seymour once spoke of him as a man «who wore a No. 7 hat and a No. 14 boot.» His movements were rather angular, but never awkward, and he was never burdened with that frequent curse of unfortunate genius, the dreadful oppression of petty self-consciousness.

It was a most remarkable character, that of Abraham Lincoln. He had the most comprehensive, the most judicious mind; he was the least faulty in his conclusions of any man that I have ever

STANTON. CHASE. PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

THE FIRST READING OF THE EMANCIP
PAINTED AT THE WHITE HOU

In the upper left-hand corner the artist introduced a portrai
The portrait over the mantelpi

WELLES. SMITH. BLAIR. BATES.
SEWARD.

ION PROCLAMATION BEFORE THE CABINET.
BY MR. FRANK B. CARPENTER IN 1864.

Simon Cameron, first Secretary of War under President Lincoln.
is of ex-President Andrew Jackson.

known. He never stepped too soon, and he never stepped too late. Just consider, if you can, the problem that was before him when he became President: One third of the country in open rebellion—not merely in rebellion on account of this peculiar property in slaves that we have spoken of, but also because its people had an intense conviction that they had the right, under the Constitution, to leave the Union when they thought it was advantageous to do so.

They had come into the Union, they had accepted the Constitution, and they could n't admit that that was an irrevocable transaction. The right of rebellion had been talked of in every quarter. Every man has a right to rebel, we were told, if only he is willing to take the

consequences. That was the doctrine of our seceding countrymen in the South. They were defending their property as we would defend ours, and they were defending what they considered to be an inherent right, the right of every freeman to say whether he will submit to the government that is over him, or rebel and take the consequences. And I am bound to declare that the most of them were just as sincere in their purpose and their passion as we were in ours.

Mr. Lincoln was not what you would call an educated man. The college that he had attended was that which a man attends who gets up at daylight to hoe the corn, and sits up at night to read the best book he can find, by the side

of a burning pine-knot. What education he had, he had picked up in that way. He had read a great many books, and all the books that he had read he knew. He had a tenacious memory, just as he had the ability to see the essential thing. He never took an unimportant point and went off upon that; but he always laid hold of the real thing, of the real question, and attended to that, without attending to the others any more than was indispensably necessary.

Thus, while we say that Mr. Lincoln was an uneducated man, uneducated in the sense that we recognize here in New Haven, or at any other great college town, he yet had a singularly perfect education in regard to everything that concerns the practical affairs of

life. His judgment was excellent, and his information was always accurate. He knew what the thing was. He was a man of genius, and, contrasted with men of education, genius will always carry the day. I remember very well going into Mr. Stanton's room in the War Department on the day of the Gettysburg celebration, and he said, «Have you seen these Gettysburg speeches?»

«No,» said I; «I did n't know you had them.»

He said, «Yes; and the people will be delighted with them. Edward Everett has made a speech that will make three columns in the newspapers, and Mr. Lincoln has made a speech of perhaps forty or fifty lines. Everett's is the speech of a scholar, polished to the last possi-

bility. It is elegant and it is learned; but Lincoln's speech will be read by a thousand men where one reads Everett's, and will be remembered as long as anybody's speeches are remembered who speaks in the English language.»

That was the truth. If you will compare those two speeches now you will get an idea how superior genius is to education; how superior that intellectual faculty is which sees the vitality of a question, and knows how to state it; how superior that intellectual faculty is which regards everything with the fire of earnestness in the soul, with the relentless purpose of a heart devoted to objects beyond literature.

Another remarkable peculiarity of Mr. Lincoln's was that he seemed to have no

illusions. He had no freakish notions that things were so, or might be so, when they were not so. All his thinking and all his reasoning, all his mind, in short, was based continually upon actual facts, and upon facts of which, as I said, he saw the essence. I never heard him say anything that was not so. I never heard him foretell things; he told what they were, but I never heard him intimate that such and such consequences were likely to happen without the consequences following. I should say, perhaps, that his greatest quality was wisdom. And that is something superior to talent, superior to education. I do not think it can be acquired. He had it; he was wise; he was not mistaken; he saw things as they were. All the advice that he gave

was wise, it was judicious, and it was always timely. This wisdom, it is scarcely necessary to add, had its animating philosophy in his own famous words, « With charity toward all, with malice toward none.» Or, to afford a more extended illustration, let me quote, from Nicolay and Hay's « History » (vol. vi, p. 152), the main part of his most admirable letter of August 22, 1862, to Horace Greeley:

If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy

slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views. I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.

Another remarkable quality was his personal kindness. He was kind at heart, not from mere politeness. As I said, I never heard him say an unkind thing about anybody. Now and then he would laugh at something jocose or satirical that somebody had done or said, but it was always pleasant humor. I noticed his sweetness of nature particularly with his little son, a child at that time perhaps seven or nine years old, who used to roam the departments, and whom everybody called «Tad.» He had a defective palate, and could n't speak very plainly. Often I have sat by his father, reporting to him about some important matter that I had been ordered to inquire into, and he would have this boy on his knee; and, while he would perfectly understand the report,

the striking thing about him was his affection for the child. He was good to everybody. Once there was a great gathering at the White House on New Year's day, and all the diplomats came in their uniforms, and all the officers of the army and navy in Washington were in full costume. A little girl of mine said, «Papa, could n't you take me over to see that?» I said yes; so I took her over and put her in a corner, where she beheld this gorgeous show. When it was finished, I went up to Mr. Lincoln, and said, «I have a little girl here who wants to shake hands with you.» He went over to her, and took her up and kissed her and talked to her. She will never forget it if she lives to be a thousand years old. That was the nature of

the man. I must tell another story to illustrate the same point.

Whenever an important campaign of the armies began Mr. Lincoln liked to send me, because when I went, with my newspaper experience, he got a clear report of everything that happened. The generals did n't like to sit down, after fighting all day, and write a report, and they were always glad to have me come to them. Well, when General Grant went out for the campaign in the Wilderness, —that was the last great campaign, which ended in the surrender of Richmond,—for two days we had no reports. One evening I got a message to come to the War Department. There I found the President and Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Lincoln said, « We are troubled

about this business down in the Wilderness. We don't know what is going on. I would like you to go down.»

I said, «Certainly.»

«How soon can you be ready?» said he.

I said, «It will take twenty minutes to go home and change my clothes, and get the things that I want to take, and get my horse saddled, and then it will take twenty minutes to get a train. Besides, we must have an escort.»

«Well,» said he, «you are willing to go?»

«Why, yes,» I said; «I am delighted. I want to see it.»

So I went and ordered a train, got my things all ready, and got an escort provided to defend the train after we had got out beyond our lines, and then went down

and got into a car. Somehow we did n't start, and presently there came a man on horseback, who said to me, «The President wants you at the War Department.» So I rode back to the War Department, and there was Mr. Lincoln with Mr. Stanton. The President said:

«I have been thinking about this, Dana, and I don't like to send you. There is Jeb Stuart, with his cavalry, roaming over the region that you will have to cross, and I am afraid to have you go.»

Said I, «Mr. Lincoln, is that the reason you called me back here?»

«Yes,» he said; «I don't like to have you go.»

I said, «I don't think that is a very good reason, because I have a good horse and forty troopers, and we are

able to run if they are too many for us, and if they are not, we can fight.»

«Well,» said he, «I am glad to hear you say that, because I really want you to go, but I could n't send you out until I felt sure that you were entirely willing yourself.»

«Well,» I answered, «you are the first general that ever gave orders in that way, I guess.»

That was the man—kindly and affectionate to everybody. I don't believe he ever spoke a cross word even to his wife. That is saying a good deal, is n't it, gentlemen?

These are amiable and lovable personal qualities, but the great thing was the fact *that he succeeded*—that the Civil War was ended under his rule. He succeeded

with the forces of the anti-slavery States in putting down a rebellion in which 12,000,000 people were concerned, determined people, educated people, fighting for their ideas and their property, fighting to the last, fighting to the death. I don't think there is anything else in history to compare with that achievement. How did he do it?

In the first place, he never was in haste. As I said, he never took a step too soon, and also he never took a step too late. When the whole Northern country seemed to be clamoring for him to issue a proclamation abolishing slavery, he did n't do it. Deputation after deputation went to Washington. I remember once a hundred gentlemen came, dressed in black coats, mostly clergymen,

from Massachusetts. They appealed to him to proclaim the abolition of slavery. But he did n't do it. He allowed Mr. Cameron and General Butler to execute their great idea of treating slaves as contraband of war, and of protecting those who had got into our lines against being recaptured by their Southern owners; but he would not prematurely make the proclamation that was so much desired. Finally the time came, and of that he was the judge. Nobody else decided it; nobody commanded it; the proclamation was issued as he thought best, and it was efficacious. The people of the North, who during the long contest over slavery had always stood strenuously by the compromises of the Constitution, might themselves have become half rebels if

this proclamation had been issued too soon. At last they were tired of waiting, tired of endeavoring to preserve even a show of regard for what was called the compromises of the Constitution when they believed the Constitution itself was in danger. Thus public opinion was ripe when the proclamation came, and that was the beginning of the end.

This unerring judgment, this patience which waited and which knew when the right time had arrived—these were intellectual qualities that I do not find exercised upon any such scale by any other man in history, and with such unerring precision. This proves Abraham Lincoln to have been intellectually one of the greatest of rulers. If we look through the record of great men, where has there

ever been one to be matched alongside of him? I don't know. He could have issued this proclamation two years before, perhaps, and the consequence of it might have been our entire defeat; but when it came it did its work, and it did us no harm whatever. Nobody protested against it, not even the Confederates themselves; but they felt it deeply.

Another interesting fact about Abraham Lincoln is that he developed into a great military man; that is to say, a man of supreme military judgment. I do not risk anything in saying that if you will study the records of the war, and study the writings relating to it, you will agree with me that the greatest general we had, greater than Grant or Thomas, was Abraham Lincoln. It was not so at

the beginning; but after three or four years of constant practice in the science and art of war, he arrived at this extraordinary knowledge of it, so that Von Moltke was not a better general, or an abler planner or expounder of a campaign, than was President Lincoln. To sum it up, he was a born leader of men. He knew human nature; he knew what chord to strike, and was never afraid to strike it when he believed that the time had arrived. On this let me tell another story.

Lincoln was a supreme politician, and he was a politician who understood politics because he understood human nature. And finally the idea was conceived that the Constitution of the United States should be amended so that slavery should

be prohibited in the Constitution. That was a change in our polity, and it was also a most important military measure. It was intended, not merely as a means of prohibiting slavery and decreeing its abolition, but as a means of affecting the judgment and the feeling and the anticipations of those in rebellion. It was believed that that amendment to the Constitution would be equivalent to new armies in the field, equivalent to sending a hundred thousand men to fight, because this would be an intellectual army and an intellectual force that would tend to paralyze the enemy and break the continuity of his ideas. In order to amend the Constitution it was necessary first to have the proposed amendment approved by two thirds of the States; and when

that question came to be considered the issue was seen to be so close that one State more was necessary. Then the State of Nevada was organized to answer that purpose, and was admitted into the Union. I have heard people sometimes complain of Nevada as a superfluous and petty State, not big enough to be a State; but when I hear that complaint I always think of Abraham Lincoln's saying, «It is easier to admit Nevada than to raise another million of soldiers.»

Well, when the question finally came around to be voted upon in the House of Representatives, it required three quarters of the votes; and this vote, this final decision, was canvassed earnestly, intensely, most anxiously, for a long time beforehand. At last, late one afternoon,

the President came into my office, a room in the third story of the War Department. He used to come there sometimes rather than send for me, because he was very fond of walking, and liked to go about a good deal. He came in, and shut the door.

«Dana,» he said, «I am very anxious about this vote. It has got to be taken next week. The time is very short. It is going to be a great deal closer than I wish it was.»

«There are plenty of Democrats who wish to vote for it,» I replied, «and who will vote for it. There is James E. English of Connecticut; I think he is sure, is n't he?»

«Oh yes; he is sure on the merits of the question.»

«Then,» said I, «there 's ‹Sunset› Cox of Ohio. How is he?»

«He is sure and fearless. But there are some others that I am not clear about. There are three that you can deal with better than anybody else, perhaps, as you know them all. I wish you would send for them.»

He told me who they were; it is n't necessary to repeat the names here. One man was from New Jersey and two from New York.

«What will they be likely to want?» I asked.

«I don't know,» said the President; «I don't know. It makes no difference, though, what they want. Here is the alternative: that we carry this vote, or be compelled to raise another million, and I

don't know how many more men, and fight no one knows how long. It is a question of three votes or new armies.»

«Well, sir,» said I, «what shall I say to these gentlemen?»

«I don't know,» said he; «but I say this to you, that whatever promise you make to those men, I will perform it.»

Well, now, this is a fact that I do not think is recorded in any history. I don't believe my friend, Thomas C. Acton, who sits back there, ever heard of it before. I sent for the men and saw them one by one. I found that they were afraid of their party. They said that some fellows in the party would be down on them. Two of them wanted internal-revenue collectors appointed. «You shall have it,» I said. Another one wanted a very

important appointment about the custom-house of New York. I knew the man well whom he wanted to have appointed. He was a Republican, though the congressman was a Democrat. I had served with him in the Republican party County Committee of New York. The office was worth perhaps $20,000 a year. When the congressman stated the case I asked him, «Do you want that?»

«Yes,» said he.

«Well,» I answered, «you shall have it.»

«I understand, of course,» said he, «that you are not saying this on your own authority?»

«Oh no,» said I; «I am saying it on the authority of the President.»

Well, he voted; the amendment was

carried, and slavery was abolished by constitutional prohibition in all of the United States. That was done, and I felt that this little piece of side politics was one of the most judicious, humane, and wise uses of executive authority that I had ever assisted in or witnessed.

But this appointment in the New York custom-house was to wait a few weeks, until the term of the actual incumbent had run out. My friend, the Democratic congressman, was quite willing. He said, «That 's all right; I am in no hurry.» Well, before the time had expired, Mr. Lincoln was murdered and Andrew Johnson became President. I had gone away, and was in the West, when one day I got a telegram from Roscoe Conkling: «Come to Washington.» So I went. He said:

«I want you to go and see President Johnson, and tell him that this is a sacred promise of Mr. Lincoln's, and that it must be kept.»

Then I went to the White House, and saw President Johnson.

«This is Mr. Lincoln's promise,» I urged. «He regarded it as saving the necessity of another call for troops, and raising perhaps a million more men to continue the war. I trust, Mr. President, that you will see your way clear to execute this promise.»

«Well, Mr. Dana,» he replied, «I don't say that I won't; but I have observed in the course of my experience that such bargains tend to immorality.»

The appointment was not made. I am happy to say, however, that the gentle-

man to whom the promise was given never found any fault, either with President Lincoln or with the Assistant Secretary who had been the means of making the promise to him.

There is perceptible, I think, a very decided disposition to convert this great element in our history—the savior of the nation, the man who brought us through that terrible Civil War with our liberties undiminished—to convert him into a kind of hero of romance, a legendary figure. He is sometimes thought to have been queer and eccentric, and there are a good many stories that seem to favor that idea. I never found anything eccentric in him. I found only wisdom and humor—humor that never failed, and that always was fresh, delightful, and relieving to the

awful seriousness of the duties that we were engaged in every day.

I remember one evening, just before the Presidential election of '64. The decision, it was plain, would turn on the vote of Pennsylvania, and the State election of Pennsylvania, which then took place in October, a month before the Presidential election, was pretty sure to show how the Presidential election would go in that State. So, on the evening of the day when that election had been held, we were all gathered in the War Department, the President, Mr. Stanton, Chief Justice Chase, Mr. Welles, and the principal generals that were then in Washington. Perhaps there were twenty gentlemen there. When I came in, at about ten o'clock, the President said to

me, «Come here, Dana; sit down here.» So I sat down beside him. The others were all sitting around, as solemn as a camp-meeting.

Indeed, it was a pretty solemn occasion, because on the decision of this election hung the question whether we were there or were not there. The President looked over to me, and said, «Did you ever read anything of Petroleum V. Nasby?» I answered, «Yes.» «Well,» he said, «I want to read you something.» So he began to read just loud enough for me to hear. Mr. Stanton could n't stand this. He got up, and went off into the telegraph room that was just alongside. Presently he opened the door, and called me: «I have got something for you.» So I went into the telegraph office. I found

that he had n't any work for me. He simply wanted to objurgate the man who could sit down at such a time and read such silly, stupid stuff as that. But that constant humor which Mr. Lincoln infused into everything was really what saved him, and brought him through the whole of this immense suffering and struggle in good health and spirits at last.

I ought to say that this disposition that I have just referred to, to invent queer stories about Mr. Lincoln, is getting corrected. The life of him which Mr. McClure is now publishing, and which Miss Ida Tarbell is writing, is based upon a thorough investigation of the facts in his history, and his family's history, and the history of his childhood, and the experience of the family in Kentucky, In-

diana, and Illinois—an investigation that has not been made before. It proves, in the first place, that Mr. Lincoln did not come of a trifling, silly, or stupid family. He belonged to the Lincolns of Hingham, Massachusetts, and he was related to the famous Governor Lincoln. Many stories about his marriage, too, are not so. Lincoln was a straight, upright, respectable man. He was a poor man, picking up knowledge as best he could, and rising by his own talent, until he reached a great place in the bar of Illinois, and finally became President of the United States.

I regard the book which Mr. McClure is publishing as a public benefaction. With this book presenting all these minute details, and with the great work

of Hay and Nicolay, Mr. Lincoln's private secretaries, giving the most important documents, we shall have amply satisfactory and faithful accounts of perhaps the greatest man in modern American history, perhaps the greatest man in the modern history of mankind.

Let me bring these reminiscences to a close with another story, which relates to the last day of Mr. Lincoln's life. It was one of my duties in the War Department to receive the reports of the officers of the Secret Service in every part of the country. One cloudy afternoon I got a telegram from the provost-marshal in Portland, Maine, saying, «I have positive information that Jacob Thompson will pass through Portland to-night, in order to take a steamer for England.

What are your orders?» Jacob Thompson of Mississippi, as you know, had been Secretary of the Interior in President Buchanan's administration. He was a conspicuous secessionist, and for some time had been employed in Canada as a semi-diplomatic agent of the Confederate government, getting up raids, of which the notorious attack on St. Albans, Vermont, was a specimen. I took the telegram, and went down and read it to Mr. Stanton. His order was prompt: «Arrest him!» But as I was going out of the door he called to me, and said, «No, wait; better go over and see the President.»

At the White House all business was over, and I went into the President's business room without meeting any one. Opening the door, there seemed to be no

one in the room, but as I was turning to go out Mr. Lincoln called me from a little side room, where he was washing his hands:

« Halloo, Dana! » said he. « What is it? What 's up? »

Then I read him the telegram.

« What does Stanton say? » he asked.

« He says arrest him, but that I should refer the question to you.»

« Well,» said he, slowly, wiping his hands, « no; I rather think not. When you have got an elephant by the hind leg, and he is trying to run away, it 's best to let him run.»

With this direction, I returned to the War Department.

« Well, what says he? » asked Mr. Stanton.

«He says that when you have got an elephant by the hind leg, and he is trying to run away, it 's best to let him run.»

«Oh, stuff!» said Stanton.

That night I was awaked from a sound sleep with the news that Mr. Lincoln had been shot, and that the Secretary wanted me at Manager Ford's house. I found the President lying unconscious, though breathing heavily, on a bed in a small side room, while all the members of the cabinet, and the Chief Justice with them, were gathered in the adjoining parlor. They seemed to be almost as much paralyzed as the unconscious sufferer within the little chamber. The surgeons said there was no hope. Mr. Stanton alone was in full activity.

«Sit down here,» said he; «I want you.»

To ren [redacted] the desk.

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